

Child Care

Subsidy and Regulation

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Purpose	Child Care Assistance (CCA) is provided to low-income families enabling parents to be employed or in school. The DHS child care program also regulates child care providers and administers child care quality improvement activities.
Who	<p>The child care program provides assistance for children under age 13 (or up to age 19 if the child has a special need) of parents who are working 28 hours or more a week or in school full-time, for children of parents participating in PROMISE JOBS activities (required for most parents receiving Family Investment Program benefits), and for children needing protective child care.</p> <p>Family gross monthly income must be below 145 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL) or 200 percent of FPL if the child has a special need. The income threshold is low to prevent the necessity of waiting lists. For a family of four, 145 percent of FPL is gross annual income of \$32,412.</p>
What	<p>The department:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Determines eligibility for subsidies and issues payments to providers. In SFY 2011, an average of 23,046 children were served each month in child care. About 90 percent of children receiving CCA were in families with employed parents.▪ Licenses and monitors 1,400 child care centers and preschools. Providers are held to rigorous standards, including state and national record checks. The 11 DHS licensing consultants attempt to conduct annual unannounced visits.▪ Registers 4,900 home-based child development home providers. Registration is required for businesses that care for at least six children at any one time, including the provider's children. Training and state record checks are required. DHS social workers attempt to perform monitoring visits to 60 percent of all registered homes.▪ Manages KinderTrack, a web-based system to administer CCA. Families use the system to apply for assistance, childcare providers use it to submit billings and apply to be registered, and the public can view provider information on-line.▪ Contracts for the statewide Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) system that helps parents find child care and provides on-site consultation and training for providers. More information about CCR&R can be found at www.iowaccrr.org▪ Operates a Quality Rating System (QRS) that helps improve quality and gives parents comparative information regarding child care. Licensed centers, school-based programs, and registered in-home providers may participate in the voluntary five-star system. An achievement bonus supports providers in maintaining or increasing their rating.
How are we doing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The number of children eligible for CCA served in regulated settings is increasing. In SFY 2011, 86 percent of all children in the CCA program were in registered or licensed care, an increase of 2 percentage points over SFY 2010.▪ As of July 2011, a third of licensed centers (534) and 16 percent of registered in-home providers (670) have received ratings in the QRS. The highest rating (five stars) has been achieved by 50 centers and 46 homes. See www.dhs.state.ia.us/igrs.